[Town Life]

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who walks about with a huge round basket on his head crying, "Pão, pão."

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Dona Carmen's husband, Damião, is also a storekeeper. His store is in the downhill part of town, near the fishermen. The two stores are run separately, and the couple are doing well financially. In addition to his store, Damião also owns [444] several canoes and fish nets which he rents to fishermen. He is the only storekeeper in town who gives credit to people who [427] cannot pay immediately, allowing bills to run many months and even more than a year. He also allows his customers to [452] borrow money in order to buy things outside his store--for [426] instance fish, which he does not handle. He does not charge interest on these loans, nor seemingly make any demands on those who borrow. On the other hand the borrowers feel a sort of loyalty toward him and do not forget their debts, which they eventually manage to pay.

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[562]

Three of the smallest stores are owned and operated by women, whose husbands have set them up in business in a small way in order, as one put it, to "give my wife something to do." It is considered desirable for a woman to operate a store and it is usually the beginning of something larger, for later, whenever possible, the husband will stop his own work and help operate the store. In the case of the smaller stores the owner generally lives in the same building, either alongside the store or behind it. The larger storekeepers, however, usually have separate houses. At night they lock up the stores, [431] which are sometimes guarded by dogs or even by the cashiers [66] who sleep there. The storekeepers are usually asked for donations to the church at the time of any special festivals, and generally become politically active after they become established in business.

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The stock in most of the stores is pretty much the same, varying in amount rather than diversity: drinks (rum and soft drinks), dried meat (the staple meat of the population), cereals, cigars, cigarettes, estivas (which include beans, rice, and farina, the three great staples of the local diet), as well as coffee, palm oil (azeite de dendê), vinegar, olive oil, garlic, onions, wooden sandals, condensed and powdered milk, salt, sugar, miudezas (small items such as matches and ribbons), toilet articles and laundry soaps, blueing agents and starch, grass mats, kerosene, and in one store aluminum kitchenware which is not sold very often, as well as nails, wire, screws, and wrapping paper and cord. One store in the

2: Hutchinson E-4,5 (1950-1951) 1957 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11
VILA RECÔNCAVO

[Class B Families]

[Class C Families]

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[114] plantation during the author's stay in the community, and her father gave her a large wedding. The wedding party left the plantation early in the morning in an oxcart decorated with white crepe paper, and proceeded to the town of Vila Recôncavo. The wedding was held in the Franciscan chapel. The townspeople did not attend the wedding or show any interest in it. Immediately after the ceremony the wedding party started back to the plantation, a five-mile trip. As each plantation nucleus was passed the cart stopped in front of the overseer's house, and small glasses of rum were passed to the guests, and the happiness of bride and groom was toasted.

[342] On arrival at the new brick house which the groom's father had presented to the couple, the bride went into the kitchen
[431] to help her mother and the other women who were preparing the luncheon. Then she passed small glasses of wine to the
[114] guests. With the exception of Dona Sinhá and the author, the guests were all overseers from the neighboring plantations. The female guests were relatives of the bride. The meal con-
[262] sisted of everything the region had to offer: fish, shrimp, salads; roasts of beef, pork, lamb, and turkey; potatoes and farina; followed by fruits, desserts, and coffee. After all the men had eaten and moved into the living room to chat, the bride and the other women sat down in the dining room to eat.

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[125] In a sample of eighteen Class B households (eleven urban and seven rural), fifteen couples were married by both civil and religious ceremonies. The remaining three couples were simply living together, a state known in northern Brazil as amasiado. In Class C a sample of ninety-five households (forty-one urban and fifty-four rural) showed twenty-three couples in the amasiado state, twenty-two married by civil and religious ceremonies, thirty-four married in church only, and eight by civil marriage alone. Eight of the couples sampled did not answer the question. In Class B, one partner in each of the three couples living in the amasiado state was married to someone else whom he or she had left.

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[161]
[127] Nineteen civil marriages were performed in the entire county (population over 11,000) during the year of 1950. They are shown below by age group. Fifty religious marriages were performed during the same year throughout the five parishes attended by the Franciscans. Because of differences in the manner of recording the two types of marriages, however, no correlation could be worked out as to how many marriages were both civil and religious. There are no statistics avail-

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the day of Christ the King, there is always a procession in town which starts from the mother church and goes to a small altar set up in front of the County Hall, then to the fishermen's chapel, to a cross which stands in one of the squares, and back to the convent and church. A few people set their small household oratories in the street in front of their houses to be blessed by the priest as he passes. This procession is accompanied mostly by women of all classes, although the canopy over the Host is carried by men from Class B. Christmas is observed quietly except for the exchange of gifts.

[778] [788] *[565] [184] •[431]

Prayers

794 782 *[565] [184]

Prayers are very popular throughout the year among the women of classes C and D. For a variety of reasons a group of women will get together in the house of one of them and pray aloud, standing before the little decorated niche which contains a picture or figure of the household saint. The one who knows the prayer best leads the others. A group may pray on the evening before the day of the patron saint of one of them, especially if they have been unable to have a Mass said because of the lack of money or a previous commitment of the priest. At times they pray because someone has promised his patron saint that he would do so if he were cured of an illness.

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Strangely, perhaps, the fishermen never seem to feel a need for supernatural help to overcome bad weather or lack of fish. A few of them, however, give a present to the Mother of the Waters in thanks for an exceptionally fine catch. At other times, people simply pray to their patron saints if they cannot have a party in their honor. Personal patron saints, however, do not play a very important part in the lives of the people of Vila Recôncavo, although nearly everyone has one and has at least a picture of the saint on the wall. It is common to find women who belong to an African cult group praying at these nightly gatherings in honor of the various saints who may or may not be represented in their cult houses.

[776] [794]

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Exceptional fatigue, light illness, and pains may all be caused by the evil eye, and are removed by having a woman pray over the victim. There are several women in town who can make such prayers particularly well; however, they do not pray as a group. A woman goes to the house of the victim and, with a piece of thread in her hand which she passes over the body of the victim, says the Lord's Prayer and the